

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 SSO-00 ISO-00 /016 R

DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:KAKURZE

APPROVED BY:S/S-O KAKURZE

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O 250831Z SEP 73 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 190312

TOSEC 28

FOLLOWING REYKJAVIK 1129 SENT ACTION STATE INFO BONN LONDON
COPENHAGEN OSLO CINCLANT COMICEDEFOR DEFENSE NATO 24 SEP
RPT TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1129

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR IC NATO OVIP

SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION NEGOTIATIONS: ICELAND FONMIN'S VISIT TO
WASHINGTON

REF: REYKJAVIK 1106 AND AMBASSADOR-EUR/NE ANDREWS TELECON
SEPT 21

1. FONMIN AGUSTSSON AGREEABLE WASHINGTON MEETINGS AS OUTLINED
REF TELECON. HIS DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON WILL BE LIMITED
TO HIMSELF, AMB KROYER AND LEGAL ADVISOR HANS ANDERSEN.
HE PREFERS SMALL BUSINESSLIKE SESSIONS. HE DEPARTS ICELAND FOR
UN SEPT 27 AND WILL PLAN FLY FROM NEW YORK TO WASHINGTON
MORNING OF OCTOBER 3 FOR TALKS, RETURNING TO NEW YORK
LATE AFTERNOON OR EVENING OCT 4. HE WILL NOT (RPT NOT) VISIT
NORFOLK. ALTHOUGH HIS WIFE TRAVELING WITH HIM TO NEW YORK SHE
WILL NOT ACCOMPANY HIM TO WASHINGTON.

2. DURING OUR DISCUSSION YESTERDAY I ADVISED HIM THAT BE-
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CAUSE IDF OPERATIONS ARE COMPLEX WHICH REQUIRE SEARCHING

STUDY, NEGOTIATIONS WILL MOST LIKELY EXTEND OVER SEVERAL MONTHS WELL INTO DECEMBER AND POSSIBLY LATER. OUR POSTURE, HOWEVER, IS ONE OF OPTIMISM, AND WITH FLEXIBILITY ON BOTH SIDES WE BELIEVE AN ACCOMMODATION CAN BE REACHED WHICH BOTH SAFEGUARDS THE BASIC MISSION OF THE IDF AND IS RESPONSIVE TO HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES. I ALSO ADVISED HIM NOT TO EXPECT A TOTAL PACKAGE OF CONCESSIONS FROM US AT WASHINGTON MEETING AND THAT HE SHOULD BE CONTENT WITH RECEIVING FROM US OUR APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM AND PERHAPS STATUS REPORT ON WHERE WE STAND IN OUR STUDIES OF IDF FUNCTIONS. I TOLD HIM I DOUBTED WE COULD TALK NUMBERS AT THIS JUNCTURE. HE REMARKED THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO TALK SOME NUMBERS; THAT THE IDF RETENTION ISSUE IS NOT SO MUCH A MILITARY QUESTION IN THE EYES OF ICELANDIC OFFICIALS AS IT IS A POLITICAL MATTER WITH THE SOLUTION BEING NUMBERS. HE SAID HE WILL HAVE TO RETURN TO ICELAND SAYING HE TALKED NUMBERS AND MAY HAVE TO GIVE SOME IDEA OF OUR THINKING. AS AN EXAMPLE HE ASKED WHETHER WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO TELL HIM THE EFFECT ON MILITARY MANPOWER REDUCTIONS IF ICELAND ENACTED AN OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT OR ITS EQUIVALENT. HE SAID THAT UNLESS HE RETURNED WITH A FEELING THAT SOMETHING HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON, WE MIGHT FIND AN UNCOMPROMISING SITUATION FACING US IN SUBSEQUENT TALKS. (COMMENT: HE WAS ALLUDING TO THE SCHEME WHICH THE TWO COMMUNIST MINISTERS TRIED TO PUSH THROUGH THE CABINET LAST WEEK CALLING FOR AN OLL MINISTER AND A PA (COMMUNIST) MINISTER TO ACCOMPANY AGUSTSSON TO WASHINGTON. IT WAS MINISTER BJORN JONSSON WHO PREVENTED THIS CATASTROPHE).

3. I ASKED AGUSTSSON WHAT SUGGESTIONS HE WAS PREPARED TO MAKE IN THE WASHINGTON MEETING AND WHAT ACTIONS HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECOMMEND TO HIS GOVT IN ORDER TO REACH AN AMICABLE SOLUTION TO THE IDF RETENTION ISSUE. HIS REPLY WAS NOT NEW. HE SAID HE WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED IF WE ACTED IN THE MEETING AS IF WE HAD NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY HIS OFT-REPEATED ADMONITION THAT THERE MUST BE A REDUCTION OF 1000 IN MILITARY MANPOWER. NEW, HOWEVER, IS A REMARK HE THEN MADE THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO BE CONVINCED THAT 1000 IS AN IMPOSSIBLE NUMBER, PROVIDED THE NUMBER WE SUGGEST CAN ALSO BE CONSIDERED "SUBSTANTIAL IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT." I REPEATED THAT I DOUBTED AT THIS STAGE WE COULD TALK TOTAL NUMBERS BECAUSE IT WOULD DEPEND ON STUDY.

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DIES STILL UNDERWAY. AS FOR THE SECOND PART OF MY QUESTION, NAMELY WHAT ACTIONS HE PREPARED TO RECOMMEND ICELAND UNDERTAKE, HE REPLIED HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO HEAR ANY SUGGESTIONS ALONG THOSE LINES WE WOULD CARE TO MAKE BUT WHETHER HE PURSUES THEM OR NOT WILL DEPEND ON HOW MANY MILITARY CAN BE REDUCED THEREBY. AGUSTSSON COULD NOT DEFINE WHAT HE MEANT BY A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF REDUCTIONS "IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT."

4. AGUSTSSON REMARKED THAT SIGURDUR GIZURARSON'S RECENT TRIP TO WASHINGTON WAS DISAPPOINTING BECAUSE HE RETURNED TO ICELAND "BRAINWASHED" AND WITH NO SPECIFICS TO HAVE JUSTIFIED THE TRIP. (COMMENT: FROM USG POINT OF VIEW TRIP SHOULD BE CONSIDERED SUCCESSFUL. GIZURARSON TOLD ME HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH CONTINUED NEED TO RETAIN IDF AND BRIEFING HE RECEIVED ON PERSONNEL SECURITY SYSTEMS.)

5. UNLESS DEPT DETERMINES OTHERWISE, I SHALL ARRIVE DEPT MORNING OCT 1 AND PLAN REMAIN ENTIRE WEEK.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE190312
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:KAKURZE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS IRVING
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730912/aaaaaiis.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: REYKJAVIK 1106 AND AMBASSADOR-EUR/NE
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12-Sep-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IDF RETENTION NEGOTIATIONS: ICELAND FONMIN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON
TAGS: MARR, OVIP, IC, NATO
To: USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005